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## Deported journalist called member of terror group

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A Colombian journalist who was expelled from the United States last month is a Cuban agent and a member of a terrorist group, the State Department said in breaking silence on the case yesterday.

Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, made the statement last night on the CBS television program "60 Minutes," which devoted one segment to the case of Patricia Lara, whose deportation last month was widely publicized.

"She's involved in murderous, terrorist activities. She ought to be detained. She should not be walking the streets of this country. People like that should not be admitted to this country," Mr. Abrams said.

Ms. Lara, 35, a reporter for Bogota's *El Tiempo*, the largest newspaper in Colombia, was detained at Kennedy International Airport in New York when she arrived in the United States to attend a journalism awards ceremony at Columbia University, and she was later deported.

In a statement from Colombia, Ms. Lara and her lawyer, Arthur Helton, denied Mr. Abrams' allegations.

Mr. Helton said he was writing to Mr. Abrams demanding to know the basis for "these extraordinary public statements."

Ms. Lara, who earned a master's degree in journalism at the university in 1980, held a valid U.S. entry visa, but immigration officials withdrew it when she arrived in the United States and detained her for seven days before deporting her to Colombia.

Mr. Helton said Ms. Lara has filed a claim against the United States

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**ELLIOTT ABRAMS**  
Assistant secretary of state

under the Federal Tort Claims Act seeking \$5 million compensation for unlawful detention. He said the U.S. government has not yet responded to the claim, which is a legal prerequisite to any lawsuit.

The State Department refused to give any reasons for the deportation of Ms. Lara at the time.

Ms. Abrams said Ms. Lara is a member of the ruling committee of the Colombian guerrilla group M-19, about which she has written a best-selling book.

"She is an active liaison between that terrorist organization, which is in the business of murdering people, and the Cuban secret police," he said.

"That's why we don't want her in this country, because she is involved in terrorist activities and she's an agent of the Cubans."

Mr. Abrams said U.S. intelligence agencies have been tracking Ms. Lara for more than 10 years and that she was given her visa by mistake.

Ms. Lara, also interviewed on "60 Minutes," denied membership in M-19 and called Mr. Abrams' statements "the biggest lie I have ever heard in my life."